



State of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations
Council on Postsecondary Education
OFFICE OF THE POSTSECONDARY COMMISSIONER
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Enclosure 5b5
April 14, 2016

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TO: Members of the Council on Postsecondary Education

FROM: Jim Purcell, Ed.D, Commissioner for Postsecondary Education

DATE: April 4, 2016

RE: Proposal from URI to move the Textiles, Fashion Merchandising and Design Department from the College of Human Science and Services to the College of Business Administration and to allow the College of Business Administration to certify and grant Bachelor of Science degrees in Textiles, Fashion Merchandising and Design and in Textile Marketing.

Background

The Department of Textiles, Fashion Merchandising and Design (TMD) is currently operating within the College of Human Sciences and Services (HSS) at URI. Since HSS is being dissolved as part of the restructuring at the university previously presented to the Council, this department seeks to operate under the College of Business Administration (CBA). Therefore, the College of Business Administration needs to have the ability to certify and grant the Bachelor of Science degrees in Textiles, Fashion Merchandising and Design, and the Bachelor of Science in Textile Marketing (TM) to students who complete these programs of study.

Rationale

The Department of Textiles, Fashion Merchandising and Design needs to move into a new degree-granting college because the College of Human Sciences and Services at URI will cease to exist as of June 30, 2016. TMD is proposing to move to the College of Business Administration.

Links between TMD and the College of Business already exist. The Textile Marketing program is a cooperative degree with CBA and 20 TMD students a year pursue a minor in business. Being housed in CBA represents an outstanding recruiting tool for most majors in TM and TMD. This move could provide synergies in course offerings, joint faculty research, and increased interest in the certificate and master's degree programs.

TMD's subject matter is rooted in the world of commerce. Textiles and fashion apparel are a huge global industry and a major component of the U.S. Economy. URI's program is endorsed by the American Apparel and Footwear Association. It is interdisciplinary in nature and global in scope. Globally, textiles, apparel and apparel retailing totals \$2 trillion annual. Sales of apparel and footwear contributed \$350 billion to the U.S. economy in 2013. Across the supply chain, the U.S. textile and apparel industry directly employs more than 4 million people, including sourcing managers, wholesalers, retailers, merchandisers, buyers, creative and technical designers and marketing professionals. The United States is the fourth largest textile exporter in the world.

The move of TMD to CBA represents opportunity to build programs in fashion business/fashion design entrepreneurship. There are no programs like this in the northeast, which could draw students from New England and the Mid-Atlantic states who want these programs in a traditional college setting while still having access to the Boston and New York City markets. This type of program could also lead to linkages between CBA and the Rhode Island School of Design's Fashion Design program.

Undergraduate TMD and TM students find employment in all sectors of the textile and apparel supply chain including textile product development, testing, sourcing, and apparel product development including design, wholesale and retail merchandising, buying, visual merchandising and as business owners/entrepreneurs. Locally or globally, it is a fertile field for entrepreneurship. Graduate students have historically become prominent museum curators, conservators and collection managers as well as instructors in academic institutions. Others work as independent textile and apparel conservators or entrepreneurs. Some have gone on to pursue PhD programs.

Institutional Role

URI's Department of Textiles, Fashion Merchandising and Design dates to the founding of the university, having been part of the original College of Home Economics. It shares that history with equivalent programs at most land-grant universities around the country. Like most of those other departments, it has evolved far beyond the original "Clothing and Textiles" to become interdisciplinary in nature and global in scope.

URI's Department of Textiles, Fashion Merchandising and Design is the epitome of an interdisciplinary program. The subject matter covered by the department is taught in approximately 150 four-year programs around the country. URI's program is one of only 13 that are endorsed by the American Apparel and Footwear Association.

Initially, TMD would remain an independent unit within CBA. The department would not be governed by the requirements of Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation and TMD students would not be required to take the core business requirements. As an independent unit, TMD would be better able to maintain its core subjects of art, history, design and social science. While Textile Marketing is heavily business focused, Textile Merchandising and Design, is the larger major and is not as heavily focused on business.

Program

URI's College of Business Administration will offer two B.S. programs, one in Textiles, Fashion Merchandising and Design and the second in Textile Marketing. TMD students can focus in the following disciplines: fashion merchandising, apparel design, history, or textile science. Students can also choose relevant courses from any of the four major tracks. The curriculum is very flexible and allows for double majors, minors, study abroad, internships and independent study. TM students can take TMD and CBA courses and have a regimented curriculum with fewer electives.

In the M.S. program, students can pursue thesis or non-thesis options in Fashion Merchandising, Historic Costume and Textiles, Textile Conservation, Cultural Analysis, and Textile Science. There are year-round internship opportunities; TMD and TM students are eligible for internships if they have a 2.5 GPA, 60 credits and have matriculated to the college.

There are two certificate programs:

- Fashion Merchandising: for students with a bachelor's degree who are looking for knowledge and skills in merchandising apparel products.
- Master Seamstress Certificate Programs: offered through URI's Feinstein College of Continuing Education in Providence. The program offers practical instruction in all aspects of apparel construction and pattern making.

Faculty

There were 8 tenure-track faculty; however, due to a resignation and retirement, there are currently only 6. TMD hopes to replace two faculty members in 2016. There are 7 adjunct, part-time faculty.

Staff and Administration

There is one full-time department secretary and one part-time collections manager for the historic textile and costume collection (15 hours/week).

To incorporate the department's activities within CBA, the TMD department needs the equivalent of at least one FTE in order to assure a proper level of service for students in both TMD and CBA. TMD is requesting additional administrative support for business affairs, advising, development, graduation certification, marketing and internship coordination.

Students

Current enrollment in TMD and TM undergraduate programs combined is 306 students, ranking it number 11 at URI. TMD has 282 students. TM has 24 students. The department draws a high proportion of out-of-state students from the Mid-Atlantic region and New England. Numbers are expected to increase with a change in the NEBHE Regional Tuition Program that allows incoming freshman to receive the discount.

There is a high completion rate in this program. Of the 105 graduates in the class of 2012, 86% have completed the program in four years, while 98% have completed in five years.

Thirty-five percent of the class of 2012 participated in study abroad, dual TMD/language degrees and emphases in sustainability and 48% of this class participated in internships.

Resources

TMD is open to sharing physical space with CBA or to remain in its current space in Quinn Hall. TMD requires classroom, lab, studio, collections (Historic Textiles and Costume Collection and the Commercial Pattern Archive), and exhibit space.

RIOPC Review

OPC staff reviewed the Notice of Change from URI proposing to move the Textiles, Fashion Merchandising and Design Department from the URI College of Human Science and Services to the College of Business Administration and to allow the College of Business Administration to certify and grant Bachelor of Science degrees in Textiles, Fashion Merchandising and Design and in Textile Marketing. The academic changes presented are within the mission, role and scope of the University and do not require Council approval.